

INHABITANTS
IN GENERAL OF
GREAT BRITAIN,
AND IRELAND;

Relating to a Few of the Consequences which must Naturally Result
from the Abolition of the SLAVE TRADE,

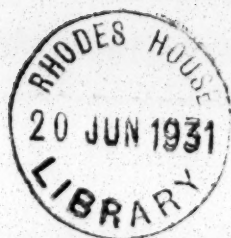
LIVERPOOL, Printed by Mrs. EGERTON SMITH, and Sold by her at the Navigation shop, Pool-lane; by Mr. THOMAS EVANS, No. 32 Pater Noster Row; and Mr. JOHN HAMILTON MOORE, No. 104 Minories Tower Hill, LONDON; and by most of the Booksellers in Town and Country.

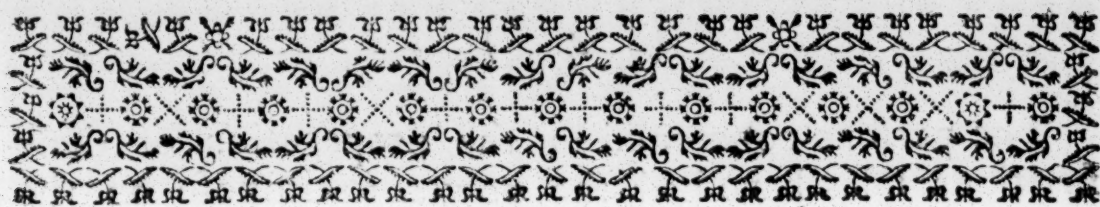
MDCCLXXXVIII.

Bt. from F Edwards.

E R R A T A.

- In Page 14, line 16, read for some time.
- Page 24, line 20, read great quantity.
- Page 26, line 18, read rank of people.
- Page 27, line 2, read with a, instead of
- Page 29, line 23, read whale for whole.
- Page 31, line 12, read Africa for Ameri





AN ADDRESS, &c.

GENTLEMEN,

A Bill having been proposed to be brought into Parliament during the present Session, with an intent to abolish the Slave Trade, as of that nature, which a particular description of persons, with the greatest activity and most unwearied Zeal, represents, not only as unjust in itself, detrimental to the feelings of humanity, and carried on with injustice and cruelty by the persons concerned, but as impolitic and of little real advantage to society in general—In support of these opinions they have pretended to adduce facts, many of which have no authority but what is dependent on their own visionary ideas, or which is equally unsupportable, having their origin for the most part from the wonderful stories which sailors are always fond of retailing to their acquaintances on shore.

The persons concerned in the propagation of these fictitious tales have had the power to impose on the credulity of many unsuspicious people, not only amongst the vulgar, but even in the higher orders of Society, particularly those whose employment consists chiefly in the pleasure resulting from the exercise of social duties and the culture of their estates, and who find more entertainment arising from these circumstances than they would do from any attention to the more bustling avocations of life; in these persons the passions are in general appealed to, their humanity becomes concerned, and they find themselves strongly inclined to follow its dictates without consulting their reason, by which means they become an easy prey to the measures of bad and designing Men, not only to the prejudice of their country, but even of their own interests: that such men may not too far impose on the public, I have thrown together a few hints on this subject in general, that the community at large may not be deluded into too hasty conclusions, which may be the occasion of overturning one great source of our commerce, of weakening our national strength, and, in consequence of this, of subjecting us to the tyranny and oppression of our enemies.

The natural enemies of this country after having found it impracticable, by long, obstinate, and bloody wars, to conquer us by force of arms, or to equal us in raising resources for the expences laid out in our own defence and their annoyance, have long known that the extensiveness of our commerce is the inexhaustible source from which we draw that power, independence, and happiness we have so long enjoyed.

The

The first bold and political attempt, supported by a few discontented persons in America and our own country, was the occasion of blowing up the flames of rebellion in the colonies, which ended at last through their joint assistance in the separation of that people from the protection of their Mother country: this dismemberment seemed to them effectually to weaken our power and diminish our resources, but, though this project was completed to their satisfaction, and the ruin of thousands the consequence, it rather increased than diminished our trade. A similar attempt has lately been made in Holland, to wean its affections entirely from a country to which it ought to be firmly bound, from the connection in Mercantile affairs one has with the other, if not from that principle of independence, which being nearly similar in the two Nations, renders them worthy of each others alliance; but our natural strength was so very soon renewed that in a short time we were enabled to defeat their intentions, and save Holland from slavery and destruction, the ever attendant consequences of internal divisions amongst the different states of a nation.

Some Years ago the French took away a few restrictions on their Slave Trade which related to the import into the West Indies, the effect of which has been a very great increase in their commerce to and from their Islands, which appeared particularly during the late War by the great addition they had made to their naval strength—Their Ministers were so conscious of the many advantages resulting from this species of trade, that they were not satisfied with having only relieved them from the former restrictions to which it was sub-
ject

ject, but have even given a bounty of ten pounds sterling for each slave brought by their own ships into the Island of St. Domingo, and about half that sum for each of those taken to their other Islands ; it was very natural for those who found such advantages from the trade to use every method to discourage the pursuance of it in their competitors ; as this however could not be done openly and by force, they have pursued a more sure plan, that of finesse, and with the assistance of some of those disaffected persons to the welfare of their country, (who indeed often are so more from interested motives than an absolute enmity to it) at the same time drawing conclusions to their advantage from the success they had in depriving the very unfortunate Americans of our protection, they have been as active in endeavouring to ruin this source of our commerce, from which, in a great measure, the kingdom derives its present prosperous situation.

It is evidently a very difficult matter to pursue the thread of this clue through all its different turns, occasioned by the intriguing policy of a neighbouring nation and probably from some discontented or interested people of our own. It is well known however that this plan for the abolition of the slave trade originated first at Philadelphia in America, but there indeed they had some plausible pretensions to act as they did. Many of the slaves in that country, after they had deserted from their owners, received their freedom either in the British or American armies during the late War, and those that remained, from their attachment to their Masters, seemed to claim a kind of right to be put, on at least as good a footing,

footing, as those who had obtained it in the above mentioned manner. Moreover than this, the number of White Men was so much greater than that of the Blacks that there appeared to be no danger of their rebelling against the state. The generosity shown on this occasion by a few individuals in America, (for even there it was by no means general) in giving freedom to their slaves, was an inducement to those turbulent spirits to apply it to the very extensive slave trade of great Britain, and not being satisfied with even this intended sacrifice have pretended to accomplish it throughout Europe. But it may be suspected they aim an heavy blow at the interests of this Kingdom in the efforts they have set on foot to delude us into the folly of being the first to follow their example, that they may thereby the sooner and the more easily come in for a share of our West India Islands. The question respecting the justice or injustice of the trade must be left to Casuists to determine : it may however be remarked that in the sacred writings we meet with several instances of the slavery under which individuals laboured. But, before the opinions of these persons prevail altogether, we ought to consider whether the negroes in a well regulated plantation, under the protection of a kind Master, do not enjoy as great, nay even greater advantages than when under their own despotic governments, or even than the greater part of our common labourers, our tradesmen, and our manufacturers ; but even in these examples, it will be said, they have a free agency, a liberty of their own, nor can I deny it, though I may with confidence say that this liberty is rather a detriment, than an advantage to them ; it is their common practice on the Saturday Night, when they receive

receive their wages, to sit down to drinking, and not to return, in general, to their work, untill nearly half of the week is expired, from which period they are obliged to labour harder than any slave, under even the most cruel Master ; and their dissipation and drunkenness are again renewed to the ruin of their own health, the distress of their families, and the detriment of their Masters ; and if labour happens to be at a stand, they and their families are reduced to the greatest despair, or are obliged to become burdensome to the different parishes where they have settlements. It appears to me and I think must to every unprejudiced mind that slaves, (as they are called) under the regulation of a humane and benevolent Man, are in a much preferable state to the one above mentioned of vice, indigence and misery—It cannot be doubted that, as the passions of Men are so very various, the negroes may suffer more hardships under one Master than under another, but these must be inconsiderable in their difference, for however the disposition of one Man may differ from another, yet that principle of self interest which pervades the greatest part of the human species, will prevent him from using them in that manner which must evidently be detrimental to himself ; also as even our laws in this civilized country have not altogether been able to define the different duties of Masters, servants and labourers, in order to prevent complaints on all sides ; how can we expect to find them more adequate in countries where the laws are in a still more imperfect condition ? I could wish that some Man, not under the prejudices to which human nature is so liable, but endowed with wisdom and fraught with those principles of philanthropy, as beneficial to society at large when attended

tended to in a proper manner as they are detrimental to it when improperly applied, would draw up a code of laws for the regulation of Masters as well as servants, by which the duties of each might be clearly ascertained, so that injustice might not exist on either side, or if it did, that the power of the civil magistrate should be sufficient to punish the offender; and that unless justice were impartially administered, the most menial servant or slave should have it in his power to arraign his judge by applying to some higher tribunal, consisting of such characters on whom neither rank nor fortune could have any influence—If however this cannot be done from the imperfect state of Mortality, let us first consider, if, at the present period, this trade is lawful according to the different states of nations over the face of the earth? secondly whether the negroes better their situation or make it worse by changing African Masters for those in the West Indies? and thirdly whether or not it is of use to society in general, and to this country in particular?

In order to ascertain the first of these questions we are to consider all the inhabitants of the coast of Africa, from the Streights of Gibraltar to the Cape of Good Hope, as divided either into Governments, wholly arbitrary, in which the sole power of the lives and property of the subjects is vested in the Monarch; or into Kingdoms, where the authority of king and people is established by certain fixed laws, to which the power of the king, as well as the right of the subject, must be subservient; and each of these subjects being only amenable to those laws of their country, which have, for ages existed, has a certain number of slaves, over

B

which

which he has the sole power of life, liberty, and disposal ; or lastly, into petty free states, where the supreme power is lodged in a certain number of freemen, of equal authority, and their dependents or people, living within their particular districts, are their property, and over which they have an absolute power of disposal, or application, as their will may direct, established by the particular laws or customs of their country.

In these three different examples, which, with a very few exceptions, include almost all the coast of Africa, every individual government has a right to dispose of its particular property (whether in slaves or other articles) according to its own laws and customs ; and, let me ask, has any earthly power a just right to interfere in the deprivation of their natural privileges, founded on the usage of their ancestors, unless, indeed, those laws, to which every other gives place, to wit, of conquest are pleaded ?

As the Africans, therefore, have a right (from their own laws) to sell their slaves, and as, according to that established by all nations, they have a power of disposing of them to any of the subjects of another country ; these as certainly have a right, if not prohibited by their own particular laws, to buy from them for their separate use. And no man, born a slave under such laws, has any right to absent himself from his master's service without his consent, though at the same time, his master is bound, not only by the laws of nature, but of his country, to supply him with all the necessaries of life, as his natural right, which may be all comprehended under the three heads of food, clothing, and protection, according to the custom of the country in which he lives,

lives. If, however, any king or his subject has given particular laws to his slaves, by which they enjoy particular privileges, and, on which account, they are to perform certain specific duties, a kind of freedom arises, and, as long, indeed, as they perform these duties, they have a good right to enjoy their privileges ; but if the performance fails on their parts, they forfeit their right to these, and their masters, on this account, have a power to reassume the forfeited privileges, and dispose of them according to the laws and customs of their particular countries. So that an African may either dispose of his slaves, which are so according to the custom of the country, or he may sell those who had forfeited their privileges by neglecting their specified duties, (where the penalty annexed to such forfeiture was, their being sold to some foreign nation) ; besides this, there are many crimes committed by both freemen and slaves, for which the present established custom is the being sold from their native country.

Another very great source of slavery amongst them is, the almost perpetual war that one nation is urging against another. Before the Slave Trade originated, it was the constant custom to put to death all that were taken in war, to prevent them afterwards from giving any trouble. These sources above-mentioned, are the most common from which the European nations are supplied with the greatest part of their slaves ; we may, however, at the same time, allow for a little smuggling or thieving, when it can be done with impunity, or when they can escape the laws of their country ; nor shall we be much surpris'd at this, when even in our own, many people have been known to do things of a similar nature,

ture, and moreover, as the dispositions of mankind will, in general, be found to be every where the same.

A similar law to this now established in Africa, was, in former times, in full force in Great-Britain, the remains of which expired so late as sixty years ago, or thereabouts; and these even were purchased by sums of money, paid to individuals possessing that right, by the state; so tenacious are our own laws of the rights of the property of the subject; and in former times the common people, over this whole island, were sold along with the land and the inhabitants had no power to absent themselves from their new purchaser without his consent. I shall now, therefore, conclude this head, with affirming, from what has been premised, that every nation has an undoubted right to be governed by its own particular laws; that no foreign nation ought to deprive the Africans of their natural privileges without their consent; that it is fair and just for these people to dispose of their slaves, prisoners of war and felons, according to their own established laws and customs; that it is lawful for any foreign nation to purchase slaves for the consideration agreed on by each party, provided that nation is not restrained from so doing, by some particular law of its own state; and, lastly, that this right is founded on the great and general law of nations.

Let us next proceed to the second question: Whether do slaves better their situation or make it worse, by changing their African masters for those in the West Indies? To answer this question, with that precision I could wish, would require a more extensive knowledge of the internal police of the coast of Africa, than any stranger can be well acquainted with; but, from the observation of those

those persons who have seen the situation of the slaves, living on or near the sea coast, there seems to be a very manifest difference, in the comparative degree of happiness, in favour of the Slaves in the West India islands.* On every part of this great continent the necessaries of life are very scantily supplied, and in consequence distributed with great uncertainty to their slaves; their family connections are but few; the males seldom marry, but attach themselves to the female according to choice, and change their connection as they think proper; whatever is produced from these connections is the property of the master of the female slave, so that there is seldom much filial affection to be seen, except indeed to the Mother, and this is but of short duration, not longer than the interest or caprice of the master makes it necessary; and in some of the more arbitrary kingdoms, as that of *Dahomy*, each child is taken from its mother, as soon as she has finished the office of a nurse, and conveyed to some distant part of the kingdom, from whence she never hears of it again, and another child is brought to her in its room: Such is the policy, particularly of this immense kingdom, that family connections may be prevented; all those inhabitants having no parents from whom they can receive protection are the most abject slaves possible, and are obliged to look up to their king as their only protector and parent. So absolute, indeed, is the king of this nation, that if the head of any individual, however powerful, is required a single executioner, having the proper insignia of his office

* Under this head are included not only the English, but all other European Settlements in the West Indies.

about him, can take it off immediately, in the midst even of his domestics ; though this is not the case in every part of Africa, yet the absolute power they have over the lives, liberty, and property of slaves is very great, and they are often reduced to the most miserable indigence from their being destitute of the common necessities of life : moreover when age or disease invades them, their masters have seldom any inclination, and often little power to relieve their distresses.

With a very few exceptions, this is a general account of the situation of the slaves on the coast of Africa ; let us now therefore consider them when purchased by Europeans and taken on board the vessels—The first circumstances attended to, are the entire cleaning of them, and supplying them with proper food; their fears are afterwards as much as possible alluaged, and for some they are confined in such a manner, that they may be prevented from hurting themselves, and from raising insurrections in the ship. Their lodging on board is made as comfortable for a long sea voyage, as it is possible for the ingenuity of man to effect, and it may be here asserted, upon the best grounds, that the officers and men on board are in general more incommoded, than the slaves ; indeed it would be impossible for the most experienced commander in his Majesty's navy to pay more attention to the accommodations for transporting soldiers by sea to different parts of the Globe, than is paid in this trade to that of the slaves—Thus every possible care is taken to bring them in good health and spirits to the market, where they are sold in sundry lots to the planter, whose particular province it is to clothe them according to the nature of the season, to provide them with proper food, and as much

as possible to soothe the fears impressed on their minds, teaching them at the same time the modes of living in the plantation, and they are rarely put to any hard labour, untill they have been well accustomed to the nature of the climate, and manner of life. They are moreover taught how to employ that time, which exempts them from working for their Masters, to wit, by cultivating those parcels of land allotted to them, by which they acquire a kind of property of their own, and some of the more industrious, even a greater than they have occasion for† The produce, they obtain in this manner, is either sold at a neighbouring market, or if the master requires it, he has the preference, though he must pay the same price it could have been sold for to any other person. And neither the planter nor his agents can claim any right to the property thus obtained by the slaves during their extra hours. Family connections are also much encouraged among them and the different plantations of slaves are always supplied at the expence of their

† In those Islands belonging to the FRENCH, the Negroes enjoy a much greater share of tranquillity than they do in our own, but this may be owing in a great measure to the number of holidays and the consequent cessation from work on those days, which are prescribed by the Roman Catholic religion; and indeed in this place we may remark that if proper attention was to be paid to this latter article in our islands the happiness resulting from it would not be inferior to that enjoyed by the Negroes in the other European Settlements; but we cannot, however, expect to find it diffused amongst the lower orders of the community, when the principals themselves do not set the example.— I have heard it asserted, that in Dominica the Church erected there was altered into an Assembly-Room; and in the island of Jamaica, as well as the former, the Clergymen, in general, were the most reprobate amongst the inhabitants.

different

different masters, with all the necessaries of life, as clothes, lodging, food &c. The circumstances above mentioned will, I think convince all impartial men that the negroes in a well regulated plantation are in a much better situation and enjoy more rational liberty, than when they were in their own country and under their former masters, or even than most of our common people, whose vicious appetites are not so well restrained within the bounds of reason.

The punishments inflicted, by the planters or their overseers, on the slaves in the West Indies, have been very much complained of by the opponents of the Slave Trade, and they have represented them as both cruel and oppressive. I shall now therefore examine these punishments, and compare them with those inflicted on our own people, for similar crimes, that the disinterested may form a proper judgment of them, when contrasted. I shall pass over the punishments inflicted by the laws of the different states for crimes, because the proceedings are nearly the same as those practised in our own courts, and shall only take notice of those punishments inflicted by the planters or their agents——When a slave is guilty of stealing, absenting himself from his masters service, and some other misdemeanours of a less important nature, but which however may have a tendency to injure the general good order of the particular plantation or of any of the neighbouring estates, the punishment inflicted is always a severe whipping according to the enormity of the crime committed, and this is always determined by the persons who manage the estate; it cannot however exceed a certain number of stripes (to wit thirty-nine) laid on by a kind of whip, which
are

are both affixed by law. I make no doubt but many of my readers will look upon this as a very severe punishment, and I will agree with them that it is not only so, but very painful during the time it lasts, though, at the same time must affirm, that it has, for the most part, very salutary effects on the delinquent, so that very few will repeat the transgression. And, indeed, it may be asserted, that there are many more crimes committed by people of the lower class in this country, than there are by an equal number of slaves in a well regulated plantation. The immediate application of the punishment, after the crime has been committed, and the certainty of its being put in execution, deter much more from the commission of crimes than the tedious processes observed in our courts of justice, which must be gone through before the delinquent receives his punishment. For even small offences, there is often a long confinement, the trial then comes on, the acquittal or conviction follows, and a certain time elapses before the execution, particularly of the latter, takes place; and, if transportation for a number of years, or a further imprisonment is the punishment to be inflicted, they frequently finish their career by a miserable death, or, if they survive the expiration of the time allotted, are frequently returned to society much worse members of it than they left it; but this, indeed, is a general observation—It might, therefore, in these instances, be better if the practice amongst the planters was rather to be followed than railed at by our own countrymen.—And, I think, there will be very few persons found who will say that a severe corporal punishment, as inflicted on the slaves in the West Indies, is by any means so cruel, as the long

C

confinement,

confinements, which often occur in our prisons, where the persons in such a situation are subject to all the inconveniences arising from filth, hunger, disease, and every species of vice. Indeed we find, by dreadful experience, that our present mode of punishing petty crimes has greatly corrupted the general bulk of the common people, and increased the number of capital delinquents, as the public executions annually testify, and which might probably have been, in many instances, prevented, had an immediate and pretty severe corporal punishment been applied after the commission of the first crime. But we have other cruelties exercised in this country, which, were they to have occurred in any other, would have met with their proper degree of opposition, as being contrary to every dictate of humanity:—Such is the state of some persons, who, having from misfortune, notwithstanding their industry and care, been indebted in a trifling sum to particular men, and, being unable to pay without some little indulgence, find themselves at the mercy of an obdurate creditor, and who is often more particularly so, when the person, thus indebted to him, happens, by his proper business, to stand somewhat in the way of his interest, he then thinks if he can lay him in prison, and put his cruelty under a cloak, by defaming his character, and thereby giving it the name of justice to confine him, he will be better able to succeed in his own particular views, and will leave the poor wretch (on whose freedom probably a whole family is dependent, even for bread) to pine away his days in misery and a scanty allowance, untill some benevolent act of insolvency releases him from the griping hands of his adversary; and at the same time the fraudulent

dugent debtor is often, after a very short confinement, liberated, because his character will, for the most part, deter people from employing him, and of course, no man will have reason to envy his situation.

A case in point occurs to my remembrance, which, as a proof of the above, I shall briefly relate:—A person, who formerly was steward to a young gentleman in the vicinity of Manchester, being placed in that station by the executors and guardians, named in his father's will during his minority, had to settle the accounts for the rents, and other business, relative thereto, with a tradesman in the neighbourhood, who was likewise mentioned as a trustee for the younger branches of the family. This person acted as a steward for nine years; during the latter part of the time, he found himself embarrassed in his accounts, which, to him, seemed to arise from irregular payment of rents, and confused settlements with the trustee, deputed by the guardians.—The steward frequently told him, that there must be some mistake in the settlements, as he found a deficiency in his accounts; cursory examinations were taken, but to no purpose, the trustee persisting that no error was or could be. When he complained to the executors, the answer was, it was impossible the trustee could err. This disagreeable predicament which the steward found himself in, was the cause of lowness of spirits and bad health; he examined his own accounts as minutely as it was possible, by his vouchers, &c.; at last a final settlement was resolved upon; private meetings were held between the executors and the trustee, at which the steward was never admitted; he was afterwards, however, called repeatedly before one or both of them, and

requested to answer such questions as they thought proper to make; the day of settlement arrived, the steward being ordered to produce all his books, vouchers, &c. with which he complied, fully expecting however, the trustee would have been present; this was not the case, he had had his audience *privately*, and was mounting his horse at the time the steward was called before the executors. After some time spent in confused questions and answers, he was ordered to leave his books, vouchers, &c. and if they wanted him again, they would give him notice. At this interview, as well as on all former occasions, the steward requested that his accounts, with those of the trustee, might undergo a thorough examination by two indifferent persons, and if, on a due inspection, the balance was still against him, he was willing to make any proper concession and recompence; this the executors positively refused, and he was discharged without having any books, accounts, or vouchers in his possession, or any other article which might lead him to discover if any errors had been made. Soon after this period, he was seized with an epidemical disorder, which then prevailed, and was seven weeks confined by it, for the most part to his room and bed, even to the day of his being arrested (which took place without any previous notice) and sent to gaol, in a state of health shocking to humanity, where he has remained ever since. About five years after this time, his son, unknown to his parents, sent a note to the young gentleman, requesting an interview with respect to his father's long confinement, his request was complied with, and he waited on the gentleman at his own house; on canvassing the affair, he told him he had no desire to keep his father in confinement,

finement, but was told there were papers belonging to him in his possession, which must first be delivered up. During this conversation the trustee, who still seems to have great influence over the young gentleman's conduct, came (abruptly, into the room, enquired what business he had in that house, told him his father was a rascal, took him by the collar, flaked him, and struck him several times with a small cane, telling him, moreover, that he would send him abroad.

The treatment the trustee gave the young man, in the presence of this young gentleman, and in his own house, (which, even in the most barbarous countries, would have been a sanctuary to him) together with the threatenings afterwards given, and the insults he was exposed to, got to his mother's ears, who soon fell a sacrifice to the grief they produced, together with the knowledge of her husband's precarious state of health.

From the appearance of this unfortunate man's situation, it seems as if he was doomed to end his days in gaol, partly from the credulity of the executors, who had put unlimited confidence in this trustee, and who, probably, did not take the trouble to look properly into the accounts themselves, but chiefly from the levity of youth, or indolence of disposition in the young gentleman to examine his own affairs, (for I will not suppose that in so young a mind cruelty and oppression would be the leading characteristics) or that he has by some means or other got into a state of *slavery* under this tyrannical tradesman, and is, on this account obliged to give up his authority in his own house, and allow him to exercise his malicious cruelty even in the presence of its master who either dare not or would not protect a stranger.

The

The greatest criminal that ever was arraigned at the bar is not passed sentence on, untill he has a candid trial before an indifferent set of men chosen as a jury, to give their verdict; but this man is imprisoned without a proper investigation or proof of the charge alledged, except what appears from the face of an account, probably very erroneous; was dragged to gaol where he has continued near six years, and is at present obliged to remain there, without being suffered to write a line to them on his own behalf, as he was informed his letters would for the future be returned unopened; these circumstances are trifling in comparison to the scandalous orders given, by a person employed in the affair, to the late gaoler; but, as I am sure they would too much shock the humanity of my reader, shall not at present relate them.

I have mentioned this case, to shew that men may be very active in redressing an imaginary evil, the true nature of which they but little understand, while they are practising the greatest oppression and tyranny at home—Two of the persons concerned in the above affair, stand in the list of subscribers for the abolition of the Slave Trade; yet it is impossible that any degree of slavery can be so dreadful to the minds of men, at least in its consequences, than the example of this kind of debtors, but as a common case, and in some instances, a lawful one, it sits easy on the conscience. I shall conclude this head, with observing that though pride, vanity and ambition are generally companions to riches, yet wisdom is rarely joined to the train, and only opens her stores to those who with diligent attention and industry court her favours; and though the different members of the societies formed in *London* and some other places, may have

have sufficient knowledge to manage their private affairs, yet if I cannot suppose any one of them, no not even the whole put together, endowed with sufficient knowledge and experience, to govern properly this little nation, to make every man enjoy as much liberty as his station in life will allow of, and to restrain him effectually from committing any offence that may be hurtful to the community at large, how then can I imagine them equal to prescribe laws of reformation to the different nations in Europe, to extend them to the immense regions of Africa, and to carry it across the ocean, to the extensive tracts of America: no statesman or number of statesmen has ever been adequate to such a task, and though there have been many wise and great men, in different ages, yet they have never been able to establish a perfect government on the face of the earth, in any kingdom or state; and indeed, from the various changes which have happened in the different states in former ages, providence for some wise purpose seems to have ordained that, the works of man must never arrive at perfection in this life.

What appears to me to be the only way of effecting a general reformation, is for every individual to be as virtuous as he can, and by his example to encourage it in others to the utmost of his power, not to practice tyranny and oppression himself, and to prevent it as much as possible in others; if this was to be the case, the poor as well as the rich, slaves as well as freemen, would enjoy as much solid happiness as is within the grasp of mankind.

I come

I come now to the third and last head ; whether or not is this trade of use to society in general, and to this country in particular? in considering the first part of this question I shall lay it down as a general maxim, *that the commerce of every nation, by changing the produce of the labour of its particular people, which they themselves have in too great a quantity, for those articles, whether of luxury or convenience, they may stand in need of, is of mutual advantage to each other, and that the specific wants of both, will by this means be relieved*—Let us now therefore contrast with one another, the inhabitants of two particular quarters of the Globe, to wit, Europe and Africa—The people of the first abound in the produce of labour arising from the knowledge of the useful arts and of manufactures, but which is in too great a quantity for their own consumption—Those of the latter born in a hot, sultry climate, but in a luxuriant soil, indolent and little inclined to labour or industry, and almost in want of every convenience of life, but what indulgent nature of her own accord supplies them with, at the same time being subject to such an increase of population, that it is impossible for the uncultivated nature of the soil to maintain them—They have indeed some natural productions, with which a great quantity of European goods may be purchased, but not in any proportion to their wants—The European nations on the other hand, are in possession of the greatest part of America, a country rich and fruitful in its soil, but very thinly inhabited, and moreover than this so unfavourable to European constitutions that it cannot by them be properly cultivated ; though at the same time of no detriment to those of the Africans, to labour in and practice every

every kind of industry, with a greater degree of enjoyment to themselves, than they had ever possessed in their former country.

The Europeans sent out the product of the labour, of their artists and manufacturers to purchase such goods as the natural productions of the country afforded, but as these were not in sufficient quantity to answer the demands of the Africans upon the Europeans, they were supplied with them in lieu of those slaves the Africans wished to dispose of, and which the Europeans were in want of, to cultivate their foreign estates, to which employment their own constitutions were not equal.

As, however, the Africans had many people guilty of crimes, who were always put to death, they found it would be more for their interest to sell them to foreigners, than to destroy them; this practice was soon afterwards followed with the prisoners taken in war, who had always been, from the universal custom of ages, put to death, and which as effectually drained their country from those they wanted to be deprived of, as if they had fallen by the hands of the executioner. The slaves obtained in this manner, were transported to the new countries in possession of the Europeans, and were employed in the culture of the land, from whose industry, joined with their directions, they found new sources of commerce open to their view, which would not only supply them with wealth, and in consequence all the luxuries of life, but would spread them through every nation of Europe, and which would be even extended to those who had no knowledge of Africa or America, but by name, upon finding the superfluous product of their labour, supply them with not only the necessaries, but

D

even

even the more refined enjoyments of life. In consequence of this expansion of commerce, the different nations began to refine their savage natures, and enter into the mild modes of social life; the faculties of the minds of men began to enlarge themselves, from this intercourse with different nations, and a more general benevolence and love of society spread throughout the whole. The Europeans, through the medium of Africa, found a market for most kinds of merchandise, and as the demand increased, new sources of commerce sprung up in every country; the deserts, the former resorts of wild beasts, became inhabited by men; the long neglected soil, rejoiced in the labours of the husbandman, and repaid him manyfold for his industry; the artist and manufacturer found out new materials to exercise their ingenuity upon; cities and towns sprung up in places unknown by name, even to former ages; commerce spread her benign influence through every rank of the people; and the conveniences and even enjoyments of life were brought within the power of every industrious man. Africa partook also of the happiness of Europe, and shared in her useful improvements; she found her long neglected natural productions to be of use, and that they could procure her a supply of some of those valuable commodities she wanted; she found, moreover, that her delinquent sons whom she had been murdering for ages past might be of service in rendering her the necessaries of life; and that even her slaves, her criminals, and her prisoners of war, found more liberty, safety, and protection in a foreign country than they had ever experienced in their own. From this general view of the African commerce and the good effects it has produced to the inhabitants not only of Europe, but even of Africa
and

and America; and the various sources it has opened for procuring wealth to society in general. Let us proceed to consider of what particular benefit it is of to Great Britain and Ireland, and what would be the consequence of its abolition.—In *Liverpool*, I am credibly informed, there are at present one hundred and twenty ships employed in this trade; their value, when fit for sea, amounts to about 240,000l.; eighty of these or upwards, for the most part, sail annually, and the expences for artificers bills, &c. will be nearly 100,000l. the greatest part of which sum is laid out for timber, sails, ropes, iron and copper articles, and workmen's wages; let us suppose that all the other sea port towns in the kingdom, when put together, have half as many ships in this trade as there are in *Liverpool*, the expence throughout the whole will then be above 360,000l. in the value of ships fit for sea, and 150,000l. for yearly repairs, all of which money settles in the trading and ultimately in the landed interest of this country. The slaves purchased by *Liverpool* ships annually, average 27,000, and allowing half that number for the remainder of the ships in this trade throughout the kingdom, the whole purchased will be 40,500; each of these will cost in Africa 18l. sterling on an average, so that the whole value of the goods sent out from this kingdom to purchase 40,500 slaves, will amount to 737,000l. we may however deduct from this sum about one-fifth part for East India goods, beads, cowries, foreign bar iron, tobacco, rum, (but even most of these are purchased by British manufactures) so that the remainder will be about 589,600l. laid out immediately in British manufactures. Out of the 40,500 slaves one-eighth part is generally lost to the merchants, by death, the remaining 35,438 for the

most part will produce, clear of commission and the privileges of the officers (at the rate of 28l. per head) 992,264l. which is returned to Great Britain, in West Indian produce. About one-eighth part of these slaves is sold to British islands, the remaining seven-eighths to the French and Spaniards, from all which a great profit results to the merchants; but we are then to deduct the outfits of the ships, the insurance, seamen's wages, the decay of property, &c. yet we may consider the whole as settling ultimately in this nation; and we may add to the above, the privileges of the officers in Liverpool, amounting to about 50,000l. and 25,000l. for the other ports, both which being added to the sum returned to the merchants, will amount to 1,067,264l. and if we add 100,000l. for the repairs of 80 ships at Liverpool, and 50,000l. at the other ports, the whole will be 1,217,264l. This is as nearly, as it can be calculated, the annual amount of the money produced by the trade carried on from Great Britain to Africa, considered simply as one existing of itself; but if we attend to it with regard to this kingdom in particular, as we have done with respect to commerce in general throughout Europe, we shall find it of the greatest consequence to its general welfare, and that it is the connecting medium of our extensive commerce as well abroad as over Europe, and that if it were to be taken out of the chain of which it composes so considerable a link, almost every staple manufacture would fall to the ground, and, as our present importance depends entirely upon the existence of our manufactures, from the abolition of this trade, it would entirely fade away, and be only known to future ages by the page of history. Every improvement in our West India islands must of course

course cease, and even those parts that are now cultivated must soon want people to keep them in their present situation; the natural consequences of which will be a diminution in the produce of the lands; the exports of our manufactures which are sent to the West Indies, as coarse linens, woollens, cottons, iron-mongery, and various other articles which are made use of by both Whites and Blacks, would be diminished in value, and the demand for the produce of our fisheries abroad, that great source of naval strength would be greatly lessened, for neither Newfoundland nor Nova Scotia would be able, in a very few years, to support themselves, on account of the decrease in the West India markets; our herring also and other fisheries at home would gradually decline, and in a short time the export of them would be at an end; even the coasting trade, which is natural to the kingdom will fail, as there will be not only a deficiency of the proper goods for supplying it, but even an inability in the persons receiving them for the payment; the Baltic trade, which depends chiefly on the state of population, and the increase of commerce must fall along with the rest; and, as we must be deprived of every superfluous article, the whole fishery must be given up, for neither can particular corporations afford to trim the lamps of the town with oil, nor can manufacturers, whose trade is evidently decreasing, make use of it in their usual quantity, and, indeed, every other source of our industry and opulence would dwindle away.

Let us now therefore for a few moments suppose that the abolition of the Slave Trade had taken place twenty years ago; the consequence would be that all the present working slaves would either be dead or past labour, for

as it is entirely contrary to the nature of population, to imagine that the waste of the people would be supplied by a new race—as the propagation of the inhabitants of large towns in England is by no means equal to keep up the usual number without having recourse to the country it will be evident that the more unfavourable climate of the West Indies can never produce a sufficiency for the renewal of the people; of course at the expiration of the time mentioned, the lands will be almost uncultivated from the power of the few inhabitants that remain, not being equal to the prevention of that luxuriance of soil from producing weeds, trees, &c. so that in a short time the islands would be covered with impenetrable woods.

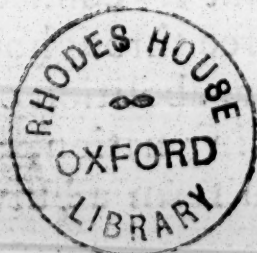
Ships will be unnecessary, as there will neither be goods to export or import; our carpenters, tradesmen, manufacturers and labourers dependent on them will have no employ; nay indeed, it will still go farther, for as money must increase in value, at least, to us, from not having means to obtain it, we shall be in want probably of the necessaries, and certainly of the conveniences of life—Every acre of land in the kingdom must decrease in value; the rent of every house will hardly pay for its repairs, and even the livings in the church must be reduced to their former statement in the King's books—Government securities will not be esteemed of value, for, as commerce leaves us, it will be impossible to pay the taxes as before, that the interest of money may be supplied—Thus I have laid before you for your attentive consideration, a few of the consequences that must naturally follow the abolition of the Slave Trade; and that this will be the case, if such an event ever happens, may in some measure be rendered more conspicuous from the effects

effects produced by the prohibition of trade, from the united states of America to our Islands, by which the inhabitants of the former have lost a great part of their traffick—From the proofs I have already adduced, it will be evident that the African trade has been of great advantage to society in general, and to this country in particular; that it is the connecting medium of all the foreign trade of Europe, which, if taken away, would unhinge the whole, and that it has been the greatest source of improvement in all our European arts and manufactures; moreover than this, that it has saved many hundred thousands of lives in America, which would otherwise have fallen by the hands of the executioner, and that those who have only changed their masters, have been better protected, and have enjoyed more freedom and greater happiness than before—I have also proved that the cries of inhumanity and cruelty urged against the planters or the overseers of the slaves have in general but little foundation in truth, and that in the West Indies they are in general as well regulated, and enjoy as much rational liberty and happiness, as the common people in this country; that the punishments inflicted on them for small crimes are much less severe and at the same time more effectual than those of the same enormity amongst our own countrymen; that the Africans have a just right to dispose of their slaves, as their own property, according to the general law of nations; and I have likewise pointed out its connection with almost every branch of commerce throughout Great Britain and Ireland; and that the abolition of it would overturn our resources as a trading nation, and entirely ruin our naval powers, which form a bulwark to the whole.

I do

I do not however pretend to say that the government of slaves in the West Indies is a perfect one; but on the contrary that very wise regulations and great improvements, for the benefit of both masters and slaves, might be thought of and put in execution; and also for that of Merchants, as well as masters of vessels in order that the trade might be conducted with more advantage and less delay on the coast of Africa; and provided some men of extensive wisdom and practical information, were to undertake a performance of this kind, we might all probably find the benefit resulting from it, but I am afraid we must not look for these improvements amongst the present subscribers for its abolition, for they seem determined by endeavouring to prevent a few delinquent slaves from having a severe whipping, to murder one hundred thousands or more annually, and under pretence of saving a few sailors from the danger of diseases to which they are subject in warm climates, but which indeed does not appear to be greater in this than in any other trade, in similar circumstances, they would endanger the existence of the maritime power of this nation, overturn all our public resources, and ruin the kingdom by an universal Bankruptcy.

F I N I S.



.
e
e
,
t
n
t
n
t
e
e-
es
h
ny
n-
a-
he